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A FEEDER FOR FOXES

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When building new fox pens or remodeling old ones, it is important that a feeder of the proper type be installed. This should function efficiently and should be constructed as economically as possible, both with regard to material and labor. If its appearance is attractive, so much the better, but utility and economy are primary.

A number of feeders for foxes, varying in type and style to meet the requirements of utility and economy, have been developed at the United States Fur Animal Experiment Station, in New York. One model, however, seems to be superior to all others for use in outside pens under average conditions. This feeder is 6 feet long and will accommodate four foxes (for construction details see fig. 1). A 2 1/2-foot feeding platform on each side of the water dish is large enough to prevent "hogging" or fighting, and an 8-inch open face allows even the largest fox easy access to food. When fewer than four foxes are kept in the pen the feeder may be shortened proportionately.

The advantages of this type of feeder are readily apparent if the foxes are fed a ration of the consistency of hamburger steak. The food is placed on the platform, preferably with a large spoon, and when the door is closed the feeding operations are completed. There are no pans to pick up, wash, or handle, and foxes are not likely to chew holes in the floor of the feeder and thus escape. Since the operator can feed the foxes from the outside and it is unnecessary to go in and out of the pen for dishes or to pick up food, less labor is required. Greater economy is also effected in construction, since the extra labor and material required to build more elaborate feeding boxes, particularly those with several partitions, is eliminated in this model.

One word of warning, however, must be given: Left-over food and crumbs must be scraped from the feeding platforms each day and must be collected in a pail, especially during warm weather, or this rejected material

may soon sour and, if eaten, cause digestive disturbances. At the Fur Animal Experiment Station the feeders are cleaned each morning at the same time the animals are watered. This procedure involves less labor, and the feeders are always cleaned at a definite time without fear of oversight. In cooler weather it is unnecessary to attend to the feeders oftener than every other day. A pancake turner or dull discarded knife makes a good scraper.

The water pan is held in place by a piece of wood 1 1/4 inches square and 8 inches long. This is covered with galvanized sheet metal and is nailed or screwed to the feeder door in such way as to press firmly on the front of the water dish when the door is closed.

The feeder is attached to the pen by extending the 2-inch face boards shown in figure 1, A, and nailing it to the pen framework. Wire netting both above and below the feeder is stapled to these boards. To avoid leaving sharp ends of wire that might tear an animal's fur, it is necessary to cut out the correct-sized section of wire from the side of the pen at the desired height before nailing the wire to the face boards. To prevent chewing the partitions and ends, it is advisable to tin the edges of each. The feeder will be stronger if the metal sheets are cut long enough to be fastened to the top and bottom crosspieces, as shown in figure 1, A, and B, and if cut wide enough to extend 1 inch along each side.

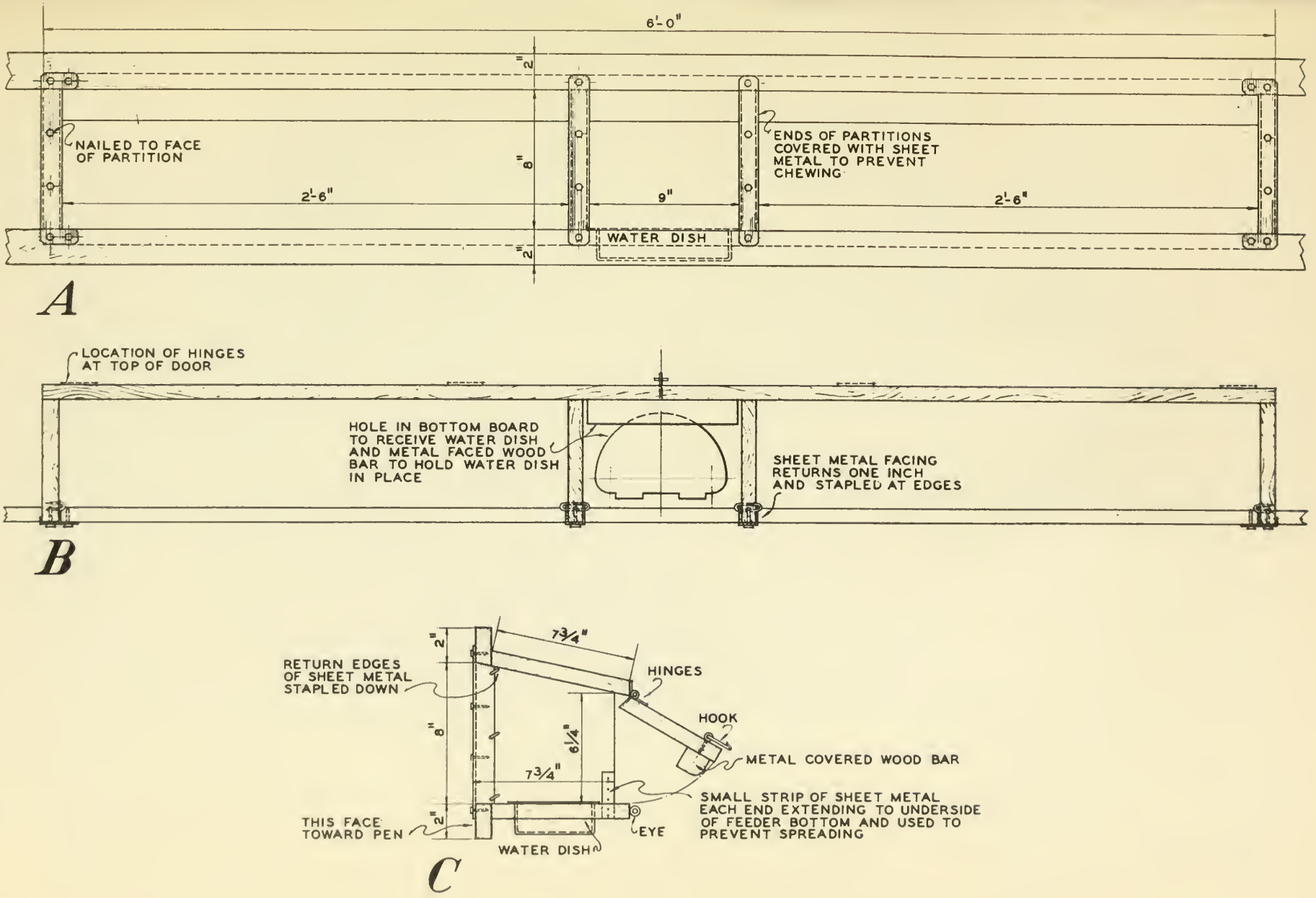
6'-0"
2"
8"
2"
NAILED TO FACE OF PARTITION
2'-6"
9"
WATER DISH
ENDS OF PARTITIONS COVERED WITH SHEET METAL TO PREVENT CHEWING
2'-6"
A
LOCATION OF HINGES AT TOP OF DOOR
HOLE IN BOTTOM BOARD TO RECEIVE WATER DISH AND METAL FACED WOOD BAR TO HOLD WATER DISH IN PLACE
SHEET METAL FACING RETURNS ONE INCH AND STAPLED AT EDGES
B
2"
7 3/4"
RETURN EDGES OF SHEET METAL STAPLED DOWN
HINGES
HOOK
8"
6 1/4"
METAL COVERED WOOD BAR
7 3/4"
SMALL STRIP OF SHEET METAL EACH END EXTENDING TO UNDERSIDE OF FEEDER BOTTOM AND USED TO PREVENT SPREADING
2"
THIS FACE TOWARD PEN
EYE
WATER DISH
C

FIGURE 1